

Tom Horne  
Superintendent

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## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING STUDENTS**

PHOENIX (Friday, February 11, 2005). The United States District Court ruled yesterday in favor of the State Board of Education on a challenge brought by attorney Tim Hogan.

State Superintendent Tom Horne described the background as follows: “Under the Flores Consent Decree, the State Board of Education was required to set standards for teachers of English language learners. The state decided to require 15 hours of training by August 2006, and 45 hours of training thereafter, for all teachers, not just those that specialize in English language learners.

“Nationally, about 40 percent of teachers encounter English language learners. The number of teachers who have eight hours or more of training is less than 13 percent of those teachers. Arizona was the first state in the nation to require training of all teachers, and by requiring 60 hours of all teachers, Arizona is the leader in filling this important gap in the knowledge of teachers.

“However, a group representing the bilingual philosophy wanted to require 272 hours of training, which, in my opinion, would have led to a revolt by teachers. It was totally out of touch with educational reality. However, attorney Tim Hogan, representing their view, sought to have the State Board held in contempt for not requiring enough training. The court disagreed.”

An excerpt from the court’s opinion follows:

The SEI [Structured English Immersion] Endorsement Task Force included representatives from school districts (large and small, urban and rural) across the state, representatives from the State’s universities and community colleges, and educators who worked directly with ELLs. The task force along with the department’s English Acquisition Services Unit all supported the option that was eventually passed. Defendants argue that this option is best because it will provide all teachers with the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to appropriately address ELL students’ unique needs and allow them to participate equally in their schools’ instructional programs.

The evidence shows that Defendants held extensive hearings, formed various committees, and put forth a good faith effort in adopting the new rules. The Court finds that Plaintiffs [the bilingual group] have failed to show by clear and convincing evidence that Defendants [the State Board of Education] have failed to

comply with the court approved stipulation. For this reason, the Court will deny Plaintiffs' Motion.

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